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CHARING CROSS

By CECIL ROBERTS

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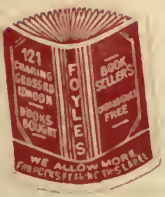


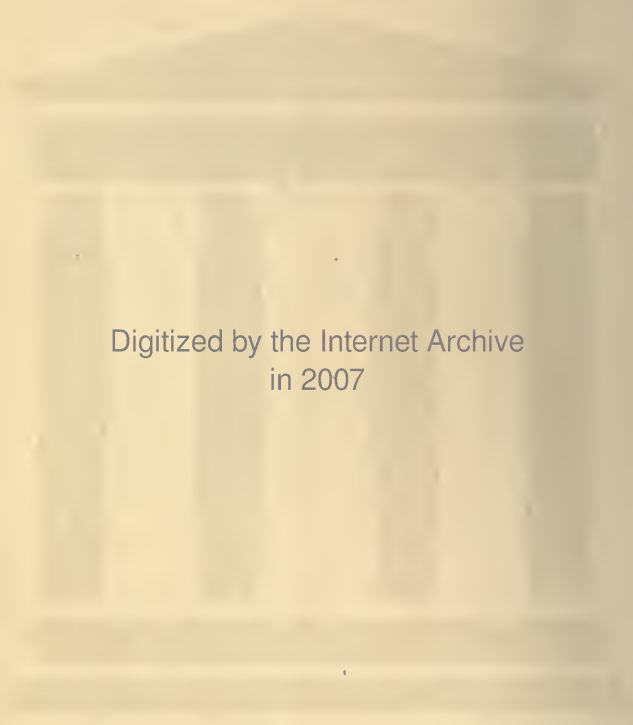
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Charing Cross

And Other Poems of the Period

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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Charing Cross

And Other Poems of the Period

By

Cecil Roberts



London

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TO THE MEMORY OF
LIEUT. ERNEST KIDDER
KILLED IN FRANCE 1918

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"To many of us, I am sure—for I can judge of the others by myself—the greatest trial that this war has brought is that it has released the old men from all restraining influences and has let them loose upon the world. The city editors, the retired majors, the amazons, and last, but I fear not least, the Venerable Archdeacons, have never been so free from contradiction. Just when the younger generation was beginning to take its share in the affairs of the world, and was hoping to counteract the Victorian influences of the older generation, this war has come to silence us—permanently or temporarily as the case may be.

"Meanwhile the old men are having field-days 'on their own.' In our name (and for *our* *sakes* as they pathetically imagine) they are doing their very utmost, it would seem, to perpetuate, by their appeals to hate, intolerance, and revenge, those very follies which have produced the present conflagration. . . .

"Were we but in sympathy with the older generation we should care not a pin for Belgian mud or German bullets. As it is, the older men are apt to fill some of us with indescribable depression, for they will blindly sacrifice, perhaps, not only us, who matter little, but our ideals too, which matter a great deal."

THE LATE LIEUTENANT ARCHIBALD DON



Preface

YOUTH, by the stupendous sacrifice which it has been called upon to make, will enter into a great inheritance of Liberty. Martyrdom is often the forerunner of Freedom. But there is a short-sightedness in some elderly persons which has enabled them to behold only the glory and gladness of Youth marching down the Valley of the Shadows. True vision has revealed under the radiant faces the tremor of deep emotion. Youth has suffered and been penalized for the very qualities it possesses, and when it returns it will find a voice to express its experience. Youth, which has saved the world, will demand the right to reconstruct it. The chaos that has broken its ranks marked the close of the ascendancy of political tradition, which to-day is utterly discredited. Vision, which is Youth, has triumphed.

For that reason we, who are of this generation of young men, have great music in our hearts ; not all the heaviness of loss, the consciousness that beloved comrades are fallen for ever from our midst—that we who remain have witnessed autumn in the spring of our discontent—can rob us of the great hope of regeneration. Not all the blunders

perpetrated, the wrongs endured, not all the sacrifices we have been called upon to make, have shattered our faith in humanity, our hope for the future.

How could they, when we have stood surprised by the splendour of Youth, have seen smiles cover heartache, laughter suppress tears, and known a silence sacred with deathless communion?

One who has been privileged to see Youth in all its activities, who has been surprised by a sudden revelation of nobility and courage undetected in close friendship, who has watched his fellows in the destroyer, the cruiser, the submarine, and the mine-sweeper, or climbing Icarian ways by airship and aeroplane, or journeying brokenly along the highway of pain that leads from the fields of death to the corridors of silent suffering—one who has witnessed these things and shared in them a little, cannot waver in his faith. The hand of heavy Fate has not crushed their indomitable souls, it has but wrung forth a challenge to the future. Our generation can never grow old for it has passed Death, the boundary of Age.

C. M. R.

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I will arise

I WILL arise,
Too long has the night been overland,
For, the terror departing, the dawn is at hand,
The morning skies
Tremble from pearl into red,
And the growing light
Awakens a world that was dead.

On the face of the world let the dawn break :
Oh, never again
Shall this midnight of madness return,
The dumb anguish, the pain
Unforgotten with letters of fire that brand and
burn—
Not these, O Lord, not these be ours again.

We have suffered that Youth should be taken
And spent as a breath,
We knew that we gambled with Life, we consorted
with Death,
And prayed for the dawn, when the reason should
cry—
“ Great spirit of Man, awaken !
Or evermore die ! ”

Then in his heart each man said low—
“ Many and many, in quenchless nobility ever
They march with a wonderful light in their eyes,
With great courage aglow
They arise and depart and never, never
Return to the hearts for whom they made sacrifice.”

I will arise !
For it shall not be that this gift of Youth
Be squandered and scattered as sand
For redemption of Truth ;
The flame that from Ignorance sprang and by
 Hatred was fanned,
Shall it burn for ever across a shrivelled land ?

Night that was dark with such hatred, the Dawn
 blows cold,
The fire of conquest dies, the unbridled lust
Sickens with surfeit, the fields enfold
Millions that fell in the clamour and now are dust ;
And they who wait in thy darkness, and ceaseless
 pray,
They are older than years,
Their sleepless eyes
Keep vigil, and tearless, having shed all tears,
They wait, and waiting say—
“ In that dawn with confession to make, I will arise.”

Youth that has died with such wonderful grace,
Young limbs that ran lightly in deadly ways,

Is there nothing bequeathed immortally ours
Save this—in a maddened world, as a tiger devours
The deer in the glade, implacable Hate devoured
Your beauty, and left but a race deflowered ?

Yet Spring when it comes will seem yours,
The immutable grace of the earth will recall you
again,
The flooded meadow, soft twilight, the lamp indoors,
The chair and the chessboard, the unfinished book
Turned down at a page where Fate wrote “ FINIS ”—
ah ! pain
That sears the heart betrayed by a casual look.

The new world in the rayless night
Lies somewhere, as sure as the song of the bird,
As the sun whose light
And warmth fail never the seed in the deep earth
stirred ;
And since by the folly of man, by his blundering
thought
This tribulation, this hell was conceived and brought
To deadly fruition of purpose that holds him in terror,
The dawn is ours to herald ; confessing error,
Redeemed by Youth's most splendid sacrifice,
We will arise !

The dead in the valley sleep, the dawn-wind blows ;
Beautiful sleepers are they whose names none knows,
Whose memory burns fainter through the years
That pass until a generation grows

Which cares not if they late or early slept ;
But I have kept
Under my anguish, deep in a well of tears,
Springs of grief that will dry not, that will flood
At every slight neglect of future years,
And when their sacrifice stirs not the blood
And some make question of this stricken time,
Daring to doubt the wisdom of the price,
Lord, Thou shalt see then with what wrath sublime,
In witness of their faith, I will arise !

Eclipse

How shall we sing, love, in these days
When darkness covers all the earth,
And Death alone has splendid praise,
How can our dreams find happy birth ?

There is no music in the wood
But mocks the heavy heart of me,
This is the age of iron and blood
And sisters none hath Charity.

Out of the darkness into light
At dawn the sons of men will come,
Then shall begin our tireless fight,
We shall not in that hour be dumb ;

There is a question to be asked,
There is an answer to be given,
And traitors who shall stand unmasked,
And new worlds made from old worlds riven.

Charing Cross

ALL through the night in silence they come and
go,

The Red Cross cars with headlights low,
And maimed humanity on stretchers lain
Glides down the streets of London—while I stand
Watching this slow processional of pain.
All through the night unending flows the stream
Whence now and then a weary, bloodless hand
Answers the greeting of the silent crowd ;
A pale and stricken face smiles back again
Upon the kind, dim faces that throng as in a
dream.

Over them as they journey, patiently bowed
A nurse keeps watch in fear lest now at last
The fluttering spirit leave the battered cage,
And eager for eternity, slip past
The guardian tending the poor, broken frame
With its disc and number and stencilled name.

And as I watch, a rebel thought
Stirs in my mind, for strange it seems
That down this highway of pain unending
There flow the streams

Of human traffic homeward brought,
Broken and useless, marred with terrible scars,
Eyeless and limbless and shattered, while under the
stars
Flow other streams that, outward wending,
Carry the youth of the nation in splendid vigour—
And those streams flow into these at the touch of a
trigger !

Long months of training that splendid humanity
needed,
The toil and brain of a nation evolved it, the
wealth
Of the wide world's meadows and mines was brought
for its use,
And with careful eyes and hands it was weeded and
weeded
Until it was virile with courage and perfect health ;

And here is the end of it all, and we count the
loss

Recording the glory, forgetting this human refuse
Left by extravagant war—borne away in the night
Swiftly and silently. God ! here again at a Cross
Crucified man in a dark world dies ; the sight
Burns to the brain, and I cry, as once one cried—
“ My God ! My God ! why hast Thou forsaken
me ? ”—then
I watch with dumb anguish the endless procession
of men,

The remnants picked up from the waste in the fields ;
they who died
Flow no more in the stream, they can rest ; and
only it matters
That Science should skilfully mend what it skilfully
shatters.

Futility

THEY send me, Charles, long letters on your death,
Full of fair phrases culled from poetry
That do not blind me—let them save their breath ;
The nectared lies of immortality,
The sounding rhetoric, the pompous phrase,
The talk of supreme sacrifice, the great
Reward—what are these 'gainst your withered days,
Your dear lost face, the squalor of your fate ?
That you were brave, I know, but still you clung
To life that meant so much ; they say you cried
In that last hour feeling you were so young,
And desperately fought for life—and died.
These letters, Charles, they mock me with their lies,
Their borrowed phrases that belittle life
And love and laughter—I can see your eyes
As once they glowed, your body like a knife
Tempered and flashing in a summer sea,
Or hear your voice enraptured over books,
Or in the bathroom singing merrily
At early morn, and days in river nooks
And tennis sets—these memories all seem
Like ghosts that haunt your room now you are
gone,
And make me think your end is but a dream,
How can it be the end—at twenty-one ?

But when I read these letters, then I know
You will not come again, nor does their praise
Lighten the heaviness of this great blow,
I cannot kiss your brow, nor see the place
Where they have left you ; as they write of fame,
Your “ splendid gift,” my only thought is this—
What will they care ten years hence for your name,
Who cares a damn who died at Salamis ?

Inscription for a Garden Memorial

E. H., killed Jutland, 1916, aged 17

J. H., „ Mesopotamia, 1917, „ 20

STRANGER, pause here and think of us awhile
Who loved this garden in our boyhood's days,
Brothers in death as life, whom many a mile
Has sundered ; for amid the pathless ways
Where northern waters roll one rests, and one
Sleeps in the desert 'neath a tropic sun.

Laugh softly, children, in your mirth, for we
Were once as you ; remember us who knew
The golden summer noons, who loved to see
The moon upon the roses, and the dew ;
Remember us and leave a votive sigh,
It was for England we went forth to die.

The Days of Old

THEY are gone—the friends I had,
Through the day, alone and sad,
Through the places where we met
I walk, dreaming of them yet ;
And the voices once so dear
Never break upon my ear ;
All are gone—no voices call,
No familiar footsteps fall,
Friends of mine, friends of mine.

They are gone and with them went
All the happy days we spent,
In the café or the street
There are left no friends to greet
With the cheery words of old,
And the empty places hold
Each a ghost of memory
That most faintly smiles at me ;
Friends of mine, friends of mine.

They are gone, and I am left
Like a thing of life bereft,
Holding dear the things they said—
Treasured things now they are dead ;

And at night the old refrain
Rises from their throats again,
And from battlefields they rise
With the old light in their eyes,
 Friends of mine, friends of mine.

They are gone—some will return,
But for some in vain I yearn,
Death has claimed their swift young lives,
And their fame alone survives ;
In the night-time oft I cry
To the unrelenting sky—
O dead comrades, dear and true,
Would that now I slept with you,
 Friends of mine, friends of mine.

The Return

PROUD to be hers, of England, war-worn, shattered
Yet holding up their heads in regal poise,
They will return, her death-forsaken boys,
Triumphant, though the ranks are scarred and
 scattered
Beyond formation evermore, so battered
And broken, memories only, swept like toys
In disarray—yet once with mighty noise,
With drums they marched away when Honour
 mattered.

When Honour mattered ! now returning, these,
How shall our Honour stand, our duty seem
To those who in the conflict kept a dream
Sacred, a thought of meadows, pools and trees
Of homeland—shall this England, that is ours
By their great strength, reward not their spent
 pow'rs ?

Inheritance

DEAD statesmen, prophets, poets, princes, kings,
And long dumb generations of this land
Who gave no less the labour of the hand,
And strength of sinew, those just offerings
You made are ours, this generation springs
From dreams that rose within you when you scanned
The future and with valiant purpose planned
Our large inheritance of splendid things.

We are the heirs of greatness, for our blood
Is regal with the dynasty of Fate,
We must not fail those we perpetuate
Nor check the purpose of that swelling flood
Which sweeps through time down hills of History
To Freedom in world-wide humanity.

The Deliverer

No star will herald him, no trumpets blare,
The age that gives him birth shall hardly know
It travails for his sake, nor watch him grow
To greatness ; yet the agony it bare
Hath formed him, and a providential care
Moulded his mind with great events ; the flow
Of adverse currents caught him, and the blow
That shook the nation wakened a spirit rare.

His eyes are lit with Hope, his heart has heard
Harmony triumphing where Tumult reigns,
And Truth, traduced, speaks from his mouth the
word

That is not shaped for dual ends, nor feigns
Construction while it undermines. No bird
Hails Dawn with surer flight than he sustains !

On some Politicians of the Period

Is this the England of those glorious men
Who wrought the charter of our liberty ?
Hampden, doth not thy spirit rise again
In wrath against this heavier tyranny,
And thou, O Cromwell, swift to answer when
Liberty was imperilled, wilt thou be
Silent in this dark hour, nor Milton's pen
Command to write thy thunderous decree ?

For England is a land oppressed where breed
The vultures of the law, a brood that cries
Over the living flesh whereon they feed ;
Humanity, immersed in blood and lies,
Pollutes the air of Heaven with its stench,
And Death strides gaily on from trench to trench.

Liberty Imperilled

Not without cause, just and unshakeable,
Will we surrender up the cherished prize
Of individual liberty, so well
And nobly held ; for if the future lies
In danger yet no warrant to despise
Ancestral freedom, power invincible,
Moulding our nation's form, doth yet arise—
Freedom alone can hold the force of Hell.

Therefore in British hearts this day the thought
Of mighty heritage shall make us calm
Amid tumultuous conflict, and maintain
Forces unchallenged, victories unbought
Of craven minds coerced by war's alarm,
Whose madness wrecks a world to count a gain.

Dawn

THIS is our Dawn, our Day ! are we not blessed
Whose eyes behold this miracle of Time,
This swift transition from the filth and grime
That choked the body of a world oppressed,
Which Custom bound, Convention overdressed
And fell Tradition drugged ?—a pantomime
Of puppets dancing in the yellow lime,
Wealth's minions in a farce by Fate suppressed.

Delivered from that Night, now we are men,
Creation is within our hands ! the vision
Dreamed in the darkness will rise up again
From ruins of a sick world's dead derision,
And Youth shall know its hour ! Youth that on
Death
Has looked and turns to Life with quickened breath !

The Airmen

ZEUS, with the old gods all at play,
Has lost the realm he ruled so long,
For younger gods are born to-day
Whose new-fledged wings are swift and strong :
So Zeus, his kingdom overrun,
Has packed his thunderbolts away
And seeks a new place in the sun.

Captain Ball, V.C.

FOREMOST among the sons of Dædalus,
His pinions were as wings unto the bird
That sunward soars and carols down to us,
For in his heart Youth sang, and we who heard
The legend of his days so brief, yet long
With valorous achievement, knew the age
Had grown heroic with a splendid throng
That claimed its empyrean heritage.
Twenty his years ; clean-limbed, clean-souled, he
 fought,
Knew Death as a familiar, bound his brows
With laurel, strove in quenchless zeal, nor sought
The honourable rest which fame allows,
 But king-like, 'mid his foes, in his last fight
 Above the sunset-glow, passed from our sight.

Prayer for the Pilot

LORD of Sea and Earth and Air,
Listen to the Pilot's prayer—
Send him wind that's steady and strong,
Grant that his engine sings the song
Of flawless tone, by which he knows
It shall not fail him where he goes ;
Landing, gliding, in curve, half—roll—
Grant him, O Lord, a full control,
That he may learn in heights of Heaven
The rapture altitude has given,
That he shall know the joy they feel
Who ride Thy realms on Birds of Steel.

Song of the Air Cadet

I'VE gone back to school again,
To Euclid and equations,
For I want to be a pilot
And to fly to all the stations
Whence, by day-time and by night-time,
Far above the reach of guns,
I may drop a little present
In the lap of hungry Huns.

I've learned to send in Morse,
The parallelogram of forces
Is plain to me, I also know
A lad with hands for horses
Can go " solo " soon, get wings soon,
Can dissemble after runs—
Just the lad for flying gaily
In the face of fearful Huns.

I've explained what " carburation " means,
A rotary's h.p.
The control of elevators,
A weak mixture's remedy :
For a pair of wings I want, sir,
Just to carry a few tons
Of remarks somewhat explosive
In the hearing of the Huns.

The Neutral Zone

SAID Death : " This is an insult grave,
That men should fly as birds, and dare
Transgress the boundaries I gave ;
It shall not be ! " Then through the air
Swept down, on vengeance sworn.

Said Life : " It is a neutral zone,
I bade them neither Yea nor Nay."
Cried Youth : " I claim it for my own ! "
Death heard and watched, then turned away
Powerless 'neath such scorn.

Life

THEY do not live who only know
The dull procession of Life's flow,
 They have no faith who never
Risk all, and in one hour of youth,
Reach the subliminal self where Truth
 Floods light and crowns endeavour.

They do not die who find in death
The great adventure, the first breath
 Whence came this life from God :
Who, taking wings, laugh down at earth,
Leap skywards, and with boyish mirth
 Run where the angels trod.

The Dover Patrol

We are the grey destroyers,
The hornets of the Fleet :
The tall ships, our employers,
Disdain our lonely beat,
Through night and day we prow! about
Take one turn in and one turn out,
Not very far from Dover,
Through every hour of the twenty-four
We hang about the Huns' back door—
Lord ! what a life for a young sea rover !

We make no claim to beauty,
The big guns know us not ;
We never dress for duty—
One suit is all we've got.
We oil ourselves, for speed's our rôle,
We'd race aught floating to the Pole
And back again to Dover.
Yet every hour of the twenty-four
We bar the dismal Huns' back door—
Lord ! what a life for a young sea rover !

We barter with the chances
That snatch our living breath,
For danger so entrances
We run full speed to death ;
“ The Lords of the Admiralty regret
That H.M.S. ——” and then forget
The T.B.D. from Dover.
Yet every hour of the twenty-four
Somebody watches the Huns' back door—
Lord ! what an end for a young sea rover !

DOVER STRAITS, *December* 1916

Lines to a Portrait of a Midship- man killed in Action

A BOY's face wherein beauty lies
As in all things untouched by age,
A waking wonder in those eyes
That scarce had looked on Life's first page,
And all that beauty and that grace
For ever gone through Time and Space.

When last I saw those lips they laughed,
Those eyes were lit with sunshine then,
Who guessed a sudden, bitter draught
Would find in you a man 'mid men,
That strength could in such frailty lie
And youth with such high courage die ?

I do not ask why unto you
So brief a span of happy days
Was given—for there was much to do,
To see, to suffer, ere the praise
And pain of Life were yours, through years
Of love and happiness, and tears.

I only know that we who move
Through heat of noon to shadowed hours

Covet your peace and oft reprove
The chance that will not make it ours ;
Not yours to know the failing strength,
The creeping of the shadow's length.

For ere the splendour of your noon,
Ere beauty had unfolded quite,
In eagerness you sought full soon
To part the curtain of our Night,
And now you know—perhaps, dear lad,
Your only pain that we are sad.

It may be heaven with your laughter
Rings, and is filled with youthful noise,
And we who wearily come after
Shall be amazed to hear a boy's
Glad greeting, and in your bright face
Find of that battle-rage no trace.

Vigil

WHEN daylight fades and darkness creeps
Over the wide and shuddering sea,
Wreathed in mist, like wandering ghosts,
The silent greyhounds guard the coasts
While England sleeps.

What can the landsman know of the deeps,
And the long, lone watch in the tense, dark night,
Sleepless vigil of bloodshot eyes,
The firm, set jaw of the man who dies
While England sleeps ?

The loud wind moans, and the dark storm leaps
Over the waste of the foam-flecked waves,
Thunder roars from the throats of steel,
In deathly throes the doomed ships reel,
While England sleeps.

When the white arm of the pale dawn swept
Over the rim of the barren sea,
No sign remained of the battle fought,
The heroes dead, the victory bought
While England slept.

Watchmen of the Night

LORD of the seas' great wilderness,
The light-grey warships cut the wind,
The headland dwindles less and less,
The great waves, breaking, drench and blind
The stern-faced watcher on the deck,
While England fades into a speck.

Afar on that horizon grey
The sleepy homesteads one by one
Shine with their cheerful lights as day
Dies in the valley and is gone,
While the new moon comes o'er the hill
And floods the landscape, white and still.

But outward 'mid the homeless waste
The battle fleet held on its way ;
On either side the torn seas raced,
Over the bridge blew up the spray ;
The quartermaster at the wheel
Steered through the night his ship of steel.

Once, from a masthead, blinked a light—
The Admiral spoke unto the Fleet ;
Swift answers flashed along the night,
The chart-house glimmered through the sleet ;

A bell rang from the engine-room,
And, ere it ceased—the great guns boom.

Then thunder through the silence broke
And rolled along the sullen deep ;
A hundred guns flashed fire and spoke,
Which England heard not in her sleep
Nor dreamed of, while her fighting sons
Fed and fired the blazing guns.

Dawn broke in England, sweet and clear,
Birds, in the brake, the lark in heaven
Made musical the morning air,
But distant, shattered, scorched and riven,
Gathered the ships—aye, dawn was well
After the night's dark, raging hell.

But some came not with break of light,
Nor looked upon the saffron dawn ;
They keep the watch of endless Night,
On the soft breast of ocean borne.
O waking England, rise and pray
For sons who guard thee night and day.

SCAPA FLOW, *May* 1916

A Naval Nursery Rhyme

SING a song of submarines, a U-boat full of Huns,
A homeward-bound old trader with ever-ready guns ;
The chief was in the engine-room, the skipper at the
wheel—

A periscope, a smooth track, a shell of polished steel.

Sing a song of submarines, the skipper swore an
oath ;

It's "Hard to Port ! Full Speed Ahead !" He
rams her, nothing loath ;

The King was in the Council-room, the Queen was
with him too,

The skipper wears a medal and—there's food for
me and you.

MILFORD HAVEN, *March* 1918

A Disavowal

THE Lord God made the day and night,
The sea and all that therein is,
He gave to man the courage to fight
And a zest to learn Life's mysteries ;
But He had no hand in T.N.T.,
Torpedo, mine and submarine,
So the sailor now goes warily,
For the sea has a breed that's a cross between
Death and the Devil, and there's no knowing
When out of port where he'll be going.

The Lord God makes the storm and wind,
The cyclone and the dread typhoon,
Sunlight to make the waters kind,
And the silvery smile of the high full moon,
Yet He has no hand in the murders done
Through night and day by the submarine ;
But He steels the heart of the man at the gun,
For the sea has a breed that's a cross between
Drake and Nelson, and there's no saying
The length of the bill the Hun is paying.

Thoughts in Spring, 1916, while Europe was at War

THROUGH all the afternoon the throbbing car
Raced up the hills, and took the winding road,
Past villages and hamlets clustering round
The little churches standing in the peace
Of country solitude, until we gained
A valley where the river broadly flowed
Along a track of silver, wending through
Verdurous meadows where the browsing kine
Found pasturage and undisturbèd peace ;
And there we paused, as though a spirit called,
With the small voice of solitude, for rest.
What sweet content breathed from the little vale !
It seemed the elemental strife which man
Can ne'er subdue, found there no sure abode ;
And I, depressed with thoughts too deep for words,
Weighted with vague unrest, intangible,—
As when one dreams and on the morrow finds
But shadowy conception of the things
Substantial in imagination—drew
Apart from those who walked with me, their hearts
Unshadowed with regret, their voices raised
In joyful accents, for I could not join
With their light-hearted gaiety, but felt

The burden of the time weigh down my soul,
Checking the generous flood of happiness.

Below me in the valley, towards the verge
Of the high hills, from whence the splendrous sun
Poured forth in golden flood, the village lay
With warm red roofs, with spirals of blue smoke
Taking their upward course among the trees
Where thrush and blackbird, and the linnet vied
In rapturous welcome to the Spring ; above,
Lost in the unclouded blue of this fair day,
A solitary lark sang out, as one
Enamoured with his voice, which hath no art
But only wild desire ; upon the hill •
A cottage window, like a burnished shield,
Caught up the radiant sun, and as the day
Slowly declined towards eventide, the light
Drew westward through vermilion bars, and glowed,
And changed and waned until the shadowy veil
Of noiseless eve fell over plain and hill ;
Around me in the hedgerows, where the buds
Gave promise of long days of leafiness,
The happy birds sang their last requiem,
And over all the countryside peace reigned.

But in the silence all my thoughts were turned
To where no eventide brought peace, no dark
Gave labour pause, but only deeper strife
And countless horrors moving in black hordes
With stalking Death, Discord and speechless Fear.

O God who formed this world, with countless gifts
Bestowed the changing hours, who filled the dawn
With matin song of birds, who blest the day
With labour in the open fields, the night
With soft refreshing slumber, and o'erhung
With countless stars the spaces of the sky
Whereby the consciousness of man should feel
The thrill and mystery when beauty wakes
Slowly to birth in Life's vast harmony—
Hast Thou despaired, withdrawn Thyself from this
Dark world where Chaos rules, and millions wage
A war for some deep rights, some purpose held
Inviolable from change ? Dear God ! in life
Is not the struggle fierce enough, the pangs
Of wild despair, vain hopes and shattered dreams,
Sufficient for the misery of man,
That all the earth in Honour's name should be
Saddened with human blood, and groan with
war—

All that dark butchery which, with banners brave,
And martial music, stalks the land and draws
The praise of the unhappy ones whose woe
Is gilded with the glory of great deeds ;
For this hath Science won her victories,
And vanquished fell disease, outstamped the plague
And placed within the hands of man the power
To rule the elements, girdle the globe,
Conquer the air, annihilate all space
And time—that Death might loom more ominous,
And Hell, with new inventive force disgorge
Fresh horrors beyond dreams' imagining ?

Nay 'tis a false corruption of the mind
Too avaricious grown, that holding dear
Power and wealth and territory stakes
A nation's happiness on one wild chance
Of ruthless acquisition for the few,
And basely doth appeal in Right's fair guise
To those who answer when their Country's name
Is challenged ; thus in honour do they die,
Nor ask the cause—these heroes, poor, obscure
In Life's unnoticed walks where toil and want
Crush out the finer feelings, hold subdued
The spirit which at danger's call is quick
To move and fight for some faint privilege
Scarcely observed in time of peace, but now,
When danger threatens, high advanced in claim
Of act reciprocal ; and all the world
Thus answers, doing that it loathes, yet held
In bondage of false service which betrays
The highest ends of life and liberty.
Thus nation wars with nation, and the earth
Groans with the carnage ; desolation dwells
Naked throughout the land, and Want's chill
touch
Withers the children's happiness ; the homes
Resound no longer with loved voices, Death
Stands by the thresholds where the broken hearts
Mourn o'er the relics of departed joy.

O my sad country ! 'tis for thee I mourn,
Seeing this misery of war's victories !
The conquests which are but embannered lies

And bring no solace to the dead, to those
Who, more than dead, live on devoid of hope !
'Tis that I love thee well I make complaint
Against the evil of this time when man,
So far advanced towards visionary goals,
Falls back to barbarism, and excels
The spirit of the past in war alone ;
And while the solemn light of evening broods
O'er this fair land where Spring hath come again
With its rich promise, and its youthful joy,
I think of those young hearts now stilled, those
 boys

With glowing faces, glossy hair, and eyes
Undimmed with weariness of life, for whom
The springtime promise hath not been fulfilled ;
For no glad Summer sees their glory ; Time
Mated their Spring with Winter, and the years
Will wax and wane, the flowers bloom and die,
The birds will sing, depart, and the pale moon
Keep her nocturnal watches, but for them—
The cold and silent dead, these glories pass
And dust becomes a little dust.

 And yet
Fondly their memory lives within our hearts
Ennobled, for they died and wrung from death
Admission of their triumph ; untraded,
Their spirits with indomitable power
Soared to the heights whereon no mundane cause,
Or questionable purpose, could evoke
Thoughts of self-interest ; and therein lies
The glory and the pathos of their doom.

Then as I mused the gathering night drew on,
Subduing all beneath its even flood ;
Stars, and the rising moon, and the low sigh
Of the soft-breathing earth ; and then a call
From my returning friends, on the soft wind,
And sadly towards them through the gloom I went.

Millennium

LORD GOD, whose hand rules over Time,
Whose love unshaken watches o'er
Thy nations spread from clime to clime,
From Arctic waste to southern shore :
Lord God, who rulest over all,
Hast Thou not heard Thy children call ?

We are but children in Thy sight
Who cannot see but blindly grope
Towards the everlasting light
That burns with undiminished hope ;
Lord God, with wisdom give us grace
To look more closely on Thy face.

The Earth's dominion man hath had—
Yet found in it desires that breed
A prouder race whose hearts are sad
With fruitless toil, insatiate greed ?
Lord God, we weary of the years
That render us but blood and tears.

The future that our fathers planned,
The dreams they knew in days of old,
Fulfilled, are ashes ; heart and hand
Faithless, have served at altars cold :
Lord God, with wider knowledge give
The deeper grace by which we live.

A nobler purpose raise, O Lord,
Within our hearts than quest of wealth,
That we may build the realm where sword
May never vex the peace and health
Of those who keep the faith of old
Nor bring Thee, Lord, a heart grown cold.

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